



**Private and Confidential**

**Review of Safeguarding Practice  
in the Religious Congregation of  
the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary  
undertaken by**

**The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the  
Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI)**

**This review was undertaken at the invitation of the Superior General**

**July 2014**

**CONTENTS**

|  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| <b><i>Background</i></b>   | <b><i>Page 3</i></b>  |
| <b><i>Standard 1</i></b><br><i>A written policy on keeping children safe</i>           | <b><i>Page 10</i></b> |
| <b><i>Standard 2</i></b><br><i>Management of allegations</i>                           | <b><i>Page 12</i></b> |
| <b><i>Standard 3</i></b><br><i>Preventing Harm to Children</i>                         | <b><i>Page 14</i></b> |
| <b><i>Standard 4</i></b><br><i>Training and Education</i>                              | <b><i>Page 17</i></b> |
| <b><i>Standard 5</i></b><br><i>Communicating the Church's<br/>Safeguarding Message</i> | <b><i>Page 18</i></b> |
| <b><i>Standard 6</i></b><br><i>Access to Advice and Support</i>                        | <b><i>Page 20</i></b> |
| <b><i>Standard 7</i></b><br><i>Implementing and Monitoring Standards</i>               | <b><i>Page 22</i></b> |
| <b><i>Recommendations</i></b>  | <b><i>Page 23</i></b> |
| <b><i>Terms of Reference</i></b>   | <b><i>Page 24</i></b> |

## **Background**

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) was asked by the Sponsoring Bodies, namely the Irish Episcopal Conference, the Conference of Religious of Ireland and the Irish Missionary Union, to undertake a comprehensive review of safeguarding practice within and across all the Church authorities on the island of Ireland. The purpose of the review is to confirm that current safeguarding practice complies with the standards set down within the guidance issued by the Sponsoring Bodies in February 2009, *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* and that all known allegations and concerns had been appropriately dealt with. To achieve this task, safeguarding practice in each Church authority is to be reviewed through an examination of case records and through interviews with key personnel involved both within and external to a diocese or other authority.

This report contains the findings of the *Review of Safeguarding Practice within the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary* undertaken by the NBSCCCI in line with the request made to it by the Sponsoring Bodies.

The findings of the review have been shared with a reference group before being submitted to the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, along with any recommendations arising from the findings. The review is not based on a review of case material as during the relevant time period there were no allegations made against members of the congregation that were within the Terms of Reference. There also were no allegations in respect of other forms of abuse within the time period, in respect of deceased and living members of the congregation. The review therefore is primarily based on policies and procedures made available plus interviews with key personnel involved in the safeguarding process within the congregation, particularly in the services run by the congregation.

## *Review of Safeguarding Practice of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary*

### **Introduction**

At the request of Sr. Elizabeth Dawson (former Superior General), staff from the NBSCCCI engaged in a process of reviewing safeguarding children policy, procedures and practice on 4/06/14. During that time and from that date interviews were conducted with key personnel, religious and lay, in the congregation's safeguarding structure.

As noted previously, there were no case files, relating to allegations of abuse to be examined.

The NBSCCCI staff read the following documents to assist in evaluating them against the 2009 Safeguarding Children:

- *The Congregational Safeguarding Policy and Procedures - March 2014.* (The first safeguarding policy in respect of children was implemented in 2002, the policies for Children and Adults were brought together in 2005.)
- *The Bessborough Centre, Child Protection Policy statement March 2014.*
- *Safeguarding Children: Policy Statement* (St. Anne's SNS, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary) October 2012.
- *Intimate Physical Care of Students Policy Statement* (St. Anne's SNS, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary) October 2012.

### **The Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary**

The congregation was established in 1903 in Chigwell, Essex, England. It was founded by Fr. Victor Braun. Their mission is to provide education, health, social and pastoral services for poor and vulnerable people, especially women and children in those parts of the world where they are called to serve.

In the first half of the 20th century the congregation known as 'the Chigwell Sisters' spread to parts of London, Liverpool, Glasgow and Edinburgh, then later to Cork, Roscrea, Castlepollard and Cardiff in Wales.

### **Past role with children**

The congregation came to Ireland in February 1922. The Sacred Heart Home was opened in Cork at the request of the Department of Health in order to accept mothers and their babies from the local county homes. In March 1924 the Bishop of Cork asked for this work to be extended to include mothers before the birth of their babies.

The congregation was then invited to open two more mother and baby homes, one in Roscrea in 1931 and then in Castlepollard in 1934. In the mid 1960's a proposal was made to change the work in the home in Castlepollard to care for those with mental health issues. This resulted in the home finally being transferred to the Health Board in 1970 when it then became a psychiatric hospital.

In 1968 a decision was made to respond to the many appeals, particularly from the Department of Health, for the congregation to make Roscrea available as a centre for children with learning

## *Review of Safeguarding Practice of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary*

difficulties. Admissions from young pregnant women stopped at the end of October 1969, those already in residence stayed until they and their babies were ready to leave.

The new work in Roscrea started in 1970 with 11 children and still continues today.

The reviewers are conscious of the proposed Inquiry into Mother and Baby Homes in the Republic of Ireland. This review does not interfere with that process, nor has it examined any practice of those homes, given that there have not been any allegations of abuse from those establishments.

### **Current role with children**

Bessborough Family Services, in Cork, is run on behalf of the congregation by lay staff under the direction of a CEO who reports to the trustees. The Bessborough Centre has, over the last decade, become a national provider of therapeutic care and assessment to at-risk families and in particular the most vulnerable women and children in society.

The education of children and young adults with special needs is considered to be a traditional apostolate of the congregation. When the Mother and Baby Home closed in Roscrea at the end of the 1960's, St. Anne's Centre was set up for adults and children with intellectual disabilities and a small school was founded on the site. The Adult Centre was taken over by another congregation in 2008 but the school continues to be the responsibility of the sisters although it is run by lay staff. The sisters are part of the Board of Management.

St. Anne's School and Bessborough Family Services are the responsibility of the congregation.

In the 1950's the congregation opened schools in California which have since been passed on to the parishes. This mission will close in 2014. One sister will remain in the mission. In the 1950's schools and hospitals were opened in Zambia. These have been passed on to local religious communities.

In the 1990's the congregation's sisters worked in El Salvador, Uganda and Cebu in the Philippines, with some sisters in Colombia. In El Salvador the congregation founded two schools which were passed on to the parishes. A small pre-school was also opened which is now the responsibility of the local authority. The main work in this area is in El Mozote where one of the worst massacres in the country took place. An association has been formed by the congregation to assist citizens seeking restitution, following this massacre, against their government for breach of human rights.

In Zambia the congregation runs a variety of projects e.g. a day centre for orphans, special schools, HIV aids programmes, income generating projects.

In Uganda, currently the congregation run a variety of projects, as above. They also run a centre for the elderly, the sick and those with special needs.

## **Review of Safeguarding Practice of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary**

In Cebu in The Philippines, the congregation is involved in a variety of projects, including day care centres, child-minding, income-generating, catechesis, physiotherapy, feeding programmes and a day centre for young people with special needs.

In the UK, the congregation have two special schools for young people with intellectual/learning difficulties. They are also responsible for a community interest company in East London. This includes two nurseries under the care of a CEO with sisters from the congregation acting as directors. There is also a nursing home for retired or ill sisters. A small number of retired sisters help in parishes.

### **Current membership of the Congregation is as follows:**

Worldwide: 124 sisters finally professed

Ireland: 36, finally professed

Worldwide: 9 temporary professed, 3 novices, 3 in candidacy

The average age of the sisters in Ireland is 75 years. The majority of the sisters in Ireland are mainly retired and located in the Bessborough convent and Roscrea. Two sisters are based in Belfast and work on the "peace line" in the city. One sister is based in Dublin and works with Renate, in respect of trafficking. Two of the sisters in Roscrea are parish sisters. Two of the group of sisters in Roscrea are also governors of St. Anne's Special School.

A number of retired sisters are also involved on a voluntary basis in community-based projects.

### **Review Process**

As there were no case files to be examined, the review consisted primarily of an analysis of the safeguarding documentation, already listed and interviews made with key safeguarding personnel. Interviews were held with the safeguarding coordinator, the principal of St. Anne's Special Needs School and the manager of Bessborough Centre.

Key managers were also interviewed in the Tusla, Child and Family Agency in Cork and North Tipperary.

In Cork in particular, they have a very close working relationship with the Bessborough services. Tusla funded projects are run from this site and the assessment services in respect of parents and their children is part of an integrated service level agreement for the services on site. Such a service level agreement requires in particular that they would be Children First compliant. The pre-school services based on this site are subject to regular annual inspection and monitoring by the preschool inspection service of Tusla.

The Special Needs School of St Anne's Roscrea comes under the auspices of the Department of Education and Skills and is inspected and monitored by their inspectors.

If any contact is required with An Garda Síochána, both sites would contact their local Garda stations. This would be Blackrock in Cork and Roscrea in North Tipperary.

## **Review of Safeguarding Practice of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary**

Contact was made with An Garda Síochána sexual crimes management unit in Dublin, who have responsibility for the co-ordination and management of allegations of sexual abuse investigations. They advised that they have no record of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Services previously provided on the Sean Ross Abbey site were subject to the Residential Institutions Redress Board Scheme and as such any cases processed under this scheme are outside the terms of reference of this review.

### **NBSCCCI Reviews**

The purpose of this NBSCCCI review is set out within the terms of reference that are appended to this report. It seeks to examine how practice conforms to expected standards within the Roman Catholic Church, both at a time an allegation was received and in the present time. It is an expectation of the NBSCCCI that key findings from a review will be shared widely, so that public awareness of what is in place and what is planned may be enhanced, as well as increasing confidence that the Church is taking appropriate steps to safeguard children.

This review was initiated through the signing of a data protection deed, allowing full access by staff from NBSCCCI to all relevant records held by the Order. The access does not constitute disclosure as the reviewer, through the deed, was deemed to be a nominated data processor of the material for the Superior General.

The review conducted an assessment of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary's safeguarding policies and procedures against the standards set down in *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2009*. All other written material provided to the reviewer was evaluated for relevance and accuracy, as was any relevant information contained on the congregation's website.

The review focussed on evaluating the efforts that have been made to create safe environments for children to ensure their current and future safety. In terms of the response to allegations/concerns the reviewer focussed on the systems in place to deal with any future concerns, as there were no historical or current cases that fell within the Terms of Reference.

To achieve these two objectives the review process employed the seven standards outlined within NBSCCCI's *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* as an assessment framework. The report below discusses the review findings under each standard. Conclusions are drawn regarding both the effectiveness of the safeguarding policies and the ability of both the relevant personnel and overall structure within the congregation to recognise, assess and manage risk for children.

Recommendations are made where considered appropriate.

It should be noted that, in carrying out this review, the NBSCCCI standards, consisting of seven standards subdivided into forty-eight criteria, is a detailed framework designed to facilitate a shaping of the Church's safeguarding structure both in dioceses and the larger congregations.

**Review of Safeguarding Practice of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary**

The profile of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (SSHJM), in Ireland, with an average age of 75 years and declining total population of sisters, placed some challenges to the congregation meeting all standards.



## **STANDARDS**

This section provides the findings of the review. The template employed to present the findings are the seven standards, set down and described in the Church's *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*. This guidance was launched in February 2009 and was endorsed and adopted by all the Church authorities that minister on the island of Ireland, including the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (SSHJM). The seven standards are:

**Standard 1** A written policy on keeping children safe

**Standard 2** Procedures – how to respond to allegations and suspicions in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland

**Standard 3** Preventing harm to children:

- Recruitment and vetting
- Running safe activities for children
- Codes of behaviour

**Standard 4** Training and education

**Standard 5** Communicating the Church's safeguarding message:

- To children
- To parents and adults
- To other organisations

**Standard 6** Access to advice and support

**Standard 7** Implementing and monitoring the Standards

Each standard contains a list of criteria, which are indicators that help decide whether this standard has been met. The criteria give details of the steps that a Church organisation - diocese or religious order - needs to take to meet the standard and ways of providing evidence that the standard has been met.

## Review of Safeguarding Practice of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary

### Standard 1

#### *A written policy on keeping children safe*

*Each child should be cherished and affirmed as a gift from God with an inherent right to dignity of life and bodily integrity, which shall be respected, nurtured and protected by all.*

Compliance with Standard 1 is only fully achieved when a congregation meets the requirements of all nine criteria against which the standard is measured.

#### Criteria

| Number | Criterion  | Met fully or Met partially or Not met |
|--------|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1.1    | The Church organisation has a child protection policy that is written in a clear and easily understandable way.  | Met Fully                             |
| 1.2    | The policy is approved and signed by the relevant leadership body of the Church organisation (e.g. the bishop of the diocese or provincial of a religious congregation).   | Met Fully                             |
| 1.3    | The policy states that all Church personnel are required to comply with it.  | Met Fully                             |
| 1.4    | The policy is reviewed at regular intervals no more than three years apart and is adapted whenever there are significant changes in the organisation or legislation.   | Met Fully                             |
| 1.5    | The policy addresses child protection in the different aspects of Church work e.g. within a church building, community work, pilgrimages, trips and holidays.  | Met Partially                         |
| 1.6    | The policy states how those individuals who pose a risk to children are managed.   | Met Partially                         |
| 1.7    | The policy clearly describes the Church's understanding and definitions of abuse.  | Met Fully                             |
| 1.8    | The policy states that all current child protection concerns must be fully reported to the civil authorities without delay.  | Met Fully                             |
| 1.9    | The policy should be created at diocese or congregational level. If a separate policy document at parish or other level is necessary this should be consistent with the diocesan or congregational policy and approved by the relevant diocesan or congregational authority before distribution. | Met Partially                         |

## *Review of Safeguarding Practice of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary*

The safeguarding policy of the SSHJM is titled *Congregational Safeguarding Policy and Procedures* and was dated March 2014. It was endorsed by Sr. Elizabeth Dawson, the former Congregational Leader, in March 2014. As the congregation is an international one, this is in essence an overarching document which is referenced by the various services around the world as they develop their own safeguarding policies and procedures. In Ireland this has meant that Bessborough and St. Anne's in Roscrea have developed policies based on the overarching safeguarding document.

The safeguarding document of the congregation is well set out and readable. In view of the above information Criteria 1.1 to 1.4 are met fully.

Criterion 1.5 is met partially as the issue of trips and holidays is not addressed specifically in the congregational safeguarding document. It is addressed in the Bessborough Document which is dated 4.3.14.

Criterion 1.6 is also met partially as the management of individuals who pose a risk to children is not set out fully in the congregational safeguarding document. St. Anne's School *Safeguarding Children Policy Statement* dated 25.10.12, does deal with this issue in more detail in the section headed *Procedure for dealing with the Employee/Volunteer*.

Criterion 1.7 is met fully. An improvement could be made within the document if the definitions and indications of abuse in the appendices were brought into the main document.

Criterion 1.8 is met fully.

Criterion 1.9 is met partially. It is recognised that the overarching congregational safeguarding document is a recent version, March 2014, but the supporting safeguarding documents of St. Anne's School and Bessborough Centre are not fully consistent with this document. During the initial review feedback all relevant managers were made aware of the inconsistencies noted in their documentation.

### **Recommendations**

- 1. That the Congregational Leader ensures that a process is put in place to ensure that the safeguarding policies in the congregation's centres in Ireland are consistent with the congregational safeguarding document, dated March 2014 and vice versa.**
- 2. That the Congregational Leader ensures that guidance in respect to trips and holidays are part of the congregational safeguarding document.**
- 3. That the Congregational Leader ensures that safety plans/agreements/contracts in respect of persons subject to allegations of having abused others are included in all relevant safeguarding documents.**

## Standard 2

### *Management of allegations*

*Children have a right to be listened to and heard: Church organisations must respond effectively and ensure any allegations and suspicions of abuse are reported both within the Church and to civil authorities.*

Compliance with Standard 2 is only fully achieved when a congregation meets the requirements of all seven criteria against which the standard is measured.

### Criteria

| Number | Criterion   | Met fully or Met partially or Not met |
|--------|---|---------------------------------------|
| 2.1    | There are clear child protection procedures in all Church organisations that provide step-by-step guidance on what action to take if there are allegations or suspicions of abuse of a child (historic or current).                         | Met Fully                             |
| 2.2    | The child protection procedures are consistent with legislation on child welfare civil guidance for child protection and written in a clear, easily understandable way.   | Met Fully                             |
| 2.3    | There is a designated officer or officer(s) with a clearly defined role and responsibilities for safeguarding children at diocesan or congregational level.   | Met Partially                         |
| 2.4    | There is a process for recording incidents, allegations and suspicions and referrals. These will be stored securely, so that confidential information is protected and complies with relevant legislation.                                  | Met Fully                             |
| 2.5    | There is a process for dealing with complaints made by adults and children about unacceptable behaviour towards children, with clear timescales for resolving the complaint.  | Not Met                               |
| 2.6    | There is guidance on confidentiality and information-sharing which makes clear that the protection of the child is the most important consideration. The Seal of Confession is absolute.  | Met Fully                             |
| 2.7    | The procedures include contact details for local child protection services e.g. (Republic of Ireland) the local Health Service Executive and An Garda Síochána; (Northern Ireland) the local health and social services trust and the PSNI. | Met Partially                         |

## *Review of Safeguarding Practice of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary*

In reviewing the relevant safeguarding documentation the following criteria are met fully: 2.1, 2.2, 2.4 and 2.6.

Criterion 2.3 is met partially. The role of the Safeguarding Coordinator is set out in the safeguarding document but not of the national link coordinators or the local safeguarding officers.

Criterion 2.5 is not met. This issue is not dealt with within the congregational safeguarding policy and procedures document. It will be the subject of a recommendation.

Criterion 2.7 is met partially. The main safeguarding document concentrates on UK contacts but for Ireland, it should include civil authority contacts for both the Republic of Ireland (ROI) and Northern Ireland.

### **Recommendations**

- 4. That the Congregational Leader ensures role descriptions for national link coordinators and local Safeguarding Officers/Designated Liaison persons are developed and included in the *Congregational Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Document*.**
- 5. That the Congregational Leader ensures that a policy for dealing with complaints from adults and children regarding unacceptable behaviour towards children and vulnerable adults is developed; and that this is included in the *Congregational Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Document*.**
- 6. That the Congregational Leader ensures that contact details for civil authorities i.e. Gardaí/PSNI and child protection services in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland are included in all congregational safeguarding documentation.**

**Standard 3**

***Preventing Harm to Children***

*This standard requires that all procedures and practices relating to creating a safe environment for children be in place and effectively implemented. These include having safe recruitment and vetting practices in place, having clear codes of behaviour for adults who work with children and by operating safe activities for children.*

Compliance with Standard 3 is only fully achieved when a Congregation meets the requirements of all twelve criteria against which the standard is measured. These criteria are grouped into three areas, safe recruitment and vetting, codes of behaviour and operating safe activities for children.

**Criteria – safe recruitment and vetting**

| <b>Number</b> | <b>Criterion</b>   | <b>Met fully or<br/>Met partially or<br/>Not met</b> |
|---------------|--|--|
| <b>3.1</b>    | There are policies and procedures for recruiting Church personnel and assessing their suitability to work with children.   | Met fully  |
| <b>3.2</b>    | The safe recruitment and vetting policy is in line with best practice guidance.  | Met fully  |
| <b>3.3</b>    | All those who have the opportunity for regular contact with children, or who are in positions of trust, complete a form declaring any previous court convictions and undergo other checks as required by legislation and guidance and this information is then properly assessed and recorded. | Met fully  |

**Criteria – Codes of behaviour**

| <b>Number</b> | <b>Criterion</b>  | <b>Met fully or<br/>Met partially or<br/>Not met</b> |
|---------------|---|--|
| <b>3.4</b>    | The Church organisation provides guidance on appropriate/ expected standards of behaviour of, adults towards children.  | Met Partially  |
| <b>3.5</b>    | There is guidance on expected and acceptable behaviour of children towards other children (anti-bullying policy).   | Met Partially  |
| <b>3.6</b>    | There are clear ways in which Church personnel can raise allegations and suspicions about unacceptable behaviour towards children by other Church personnel or volunteers ('whistle-blowing'), confidentially if necessary. | Met fully  |

**Review of Safeguarding Practice of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary**

|            |  |               |
|------------|--|---------------|
| <b>3.7</b> | There are processes for dealing with children’s unacceptable behaviour that do not involve physical punishment or any other form of degrading or humiliating treatment.  | Met Partially |
| <b>3.8</b> | Guidance to staff and children makes it clear that discriminatory behaviour or language in relation to any of the following is not acceptable: race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political views. | Met Partially |
| <b>3.9</b> | Policies include guidelines on the personal/ intimate care of children with disabilities, including appropriate and inappropriate touch.   | Met Partially |

**Criteria – Operating safe activities for children**

| <b>Number</b> | <b>Criterion</b>   | <b>Met fully or Met partially or Not met</b> |
|---------------|--|--|
| <b>3.10</b>   | There is guidance on assessing all possible risks when working with children – especially in activities that involve time spent away from home.  | Met Partially                                |
| <b>3.11</b>   | When operating projects/ activities children are adequately supervised and protected at all times.   | Met Partially                                |
| <b>3.12</b>   | Guidelines exist for appropriate use of information technology (such as mobile phones, email, digital cameras, websites, the Internet) to make sure that children are not put in danger and exposed to abuse and exploitation. | Met Fully                                    |

In terms of safe recruiting and vetting of religious, staff and volunteers Criteria 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 are met fully.

Criteria 3.4, 3.5, 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9 are met partially.

The local safeguarding documentation, particularly of St. Anne’s School and of Bessborough Centre contains the detail to satisfy these criteria, but not, in the view of the reviewer, the congregational safeguarding policy. The Draft Code of Conduct will also assist in this area.

Criteria 3.10 and 3.11 are met partially.

Criteria 3.12 is met fully via the *Safe use of the Internet Policy*.

**Recommendation**

- 7. That the Congregational Leader conducts a review of the policy to ensure that all aspects of Standard 3 are included in any future revision of the policy document.**



**Review of Safeguarding Practice of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary**

**Standard 4**

***Training and Education***

*All Church personnel should be offered training in child protection to maintain high standards and good practice.*

**Criteria**

| <b>Number</b> | <b>Criterion</b>  | <b>Met fully or Met partially or Not met</b> |
|---------------|---|--|
| <b>4.1</b>    | All Church personnel who work with children are inducted into the Church's policy and procedures on child protection when they begin working within Church organisations.                           | Met Fully                                    |
| <b>4.2</b>    | Identified Church personnel are provided with appropriate training for keeping children safe with regular opportunities to update their skills and knowledge.                                       | Met Fully                                    |
| <b>4.3</b>    | Training is provided to those with additional responsibilities such as recruiting and selecting staff, dealing with complaints, disciplinary processes, managing risk, acting as designated person. | Met Fully                                    |
| <b>4.4</b>    | Training programmes are approved by National Board for Safeguarding Children and updated in line with current legislation, guidance and best practice.  | Met Fully                                    |

Criteria 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 are met fully.

The congregation is committed to ongoing training of religious, staff and volunteers in respect of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. St. Anne's School receives its training through the Department of Education and Skills.

Bessborough Centre operates a 2 year cycle of training with three sessions of training in each cycle.

One of the sessions is in respect of *Children First* requirements. The induction sessions for new staff in Bessborough also include a session on their internal policy in respect of child protection. Staff who deliver the safeguarding training in Bessborough have been trained as trainers by HSE Children First Advice and Information staff.

**Standard 5**

***Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message***

*This standard requires that the Church's safeguarding policies and procedures be successfully communicated to Church personnel and parishioners (including children). This can be achieved through the prominent display of the Church policy, making children aware of their right to speak out and knowing who to speak to, having the Designated Person's contact details clearly visible, ensuring Church personnel have access to contact details for child protection services, having good working relationships with statutory child protection agencies and developing a communication plan which reflects the Church's commitment to transparency.*

**Criteria**

| <b>Number</b> | <b>Criterion</b>   | <b>Met fully or<br/>Met partially or<br/>Not met</b> |
|---------------|--|--|
| <b>5.1</b>    | The child protection policy is openly displayed and available to everyone.   | Met Fully  |
| <b>5.2</b>    | Children are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse and who to speak to if they have concerns.  | Met Partially  |
| <b>5.3</b>    | Everyone in Church organisations knows who the designated person is and how to contact them.   | Met Fully  |
| <b>5.4</b>    | Church personnel are provided with contact details of local child protection services, such as Health and Social Care Trusts / Health Service Executive, PSNI, An Garda Síochána, telephone helplines and the designated person. | Met Partially  |
| <b>5.5</b>    | Church organisations establish links with statutory child protection agencies to develop good working relationships in order to keep children safe.  | Met Fully  |
| <b>5.6</b>    | Church organisations at diocesan and religious order level have an established communications policy which reflects a commitment to transparency and openness.   | Met Fully  |

Criteria 5.1, 5.3, 5.5 and 5.6 are met fully.

Criterion 5.2 is met partially. The congregational safeguarding document sets out the process for children to follow if they have concerns but child-centred and child-friendly language is not used. There is an absence of information for children on the congregation's child safeguarding policy.

**Review of Safeguarding Practice of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary**

Criterion 5.4 is met partially. The full information in respect of the civil authorities to contact re child protection/vulnerable adult concerns in Ireland is not available in full in the congregational safeguarding policy and procedures document.

**Recommendation**

- 8. That the Congregational Leader ensures that safeguarding information for children which is age appropriate and in child-friendly language is developed.**

**Review of Safeguarding Practice of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary**

**Standard 6**

***Access to Advice and Support***

*Those who have suffered child abuse should receive a compassionate and just response and should be offered appropriate pastoral care to rebuild their lives.*

*Those who have harmed others should be helped to face up to the reality of abuse, as well as being assisted in healing.*

**Criteria**

| <b>Number</b> | <b>Criterion</b>   | <b>Met fully or Met partially or Not met</b> |
|---------------|--|--|
| <b>6.1</b>    | Church personnel with special responsibilities for keeping children safe have access to specialist advice, support and information on child protection.  | Met Fully                                    |
| <b>6.2</b>    | Contacts are established at a national and/ or local level with the relevant child protection/ welfare agencies and helplines that can provide information, support and assistance to children and Church personnel. | Met Fully                                    |
| <b>6.3</b>    | There is guidance on how to respond to and support a child who is suspected to have been abused whether that abuse is by someone within the Church or in the community, including family members or peers.           | Met Fully                                    |
| <b>6.4</b>    | Information is provided to those who have experienced abuse on how to seek support.  | Met Partially                                |
| <b>6.5</b>    | Appropriate support is provided to those who have perpetrated abuse to help them to face up to the reality of abuse as well as to promote healing in a manner which does not compromise children's safety.           | Met Partially                                |

Criteria 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 are met fully.

In respect of 6.2 the main service sites of St. Anne's Special Needs School and Bessborough Centre maintain links with their local TUSLA and Garda services.

Criterion 6.4 is met partially. The congregational safeguarding document needs to be more explicit on the response that should be given to children and/or adults who have experienced abuse and are seeking support.

Criterion 6.5 is also met partially. As recommended previously a process which would involve protection plans would need to be put in place for perpetrators of abuse.

**Recommendations**

- 9. That the Congregational Leader ensures the identification and training of specific survivor and respondent support personnel, which would enhance and provide a structured response of the congregation to future allegations.**

**Review of Safeguarding Practice of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary**

**Standard 7**

***Implementing and Monitoring Standards***

*Standard 7 outlines the need to develop a plan of action, which monitors the effectiveness of the steps being taken to keep children safe. This is achieved through making a written plan, having the human and financial resources available, monitoring compliance and ensuring all allegations and suspicions are recorded and stored securely.*

**Criteria**

| <b>Number</b> | <b>Criterion</b>   | <b>Met fully or Met partially or Not met</b> |
|---------------|--|--|
| <b>7.1</b>    | There is a written plan showing what steps will be taken to keep children safe, who is responsible for implementing these measures and when these will be completed. | Not Met                                      |
| <b>7.2</b>    | The human or financial resources necessary for implementing the plan are made available.   | Met Fully                                    |
| <b>7.3</b>    | Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with child protection policies and procedures.   | Met Fully                                    |
| <b>7.4</b>    | Processes are in place to ask parishioners (children and parents/ carers) about their views on policies and practices for keeping children safe.                     | Not Met                                      |
| <b>7.5</b>    | All incidents, allegations/ suspicions of abuse are recorded and stored securely.  | Met Fully                                    |

Criterion 7.1 is not met. There currently is not a specific safeguarding plan of action in place for the congregation.

Criterion 7.2, 7.3 and 7.5 are met fully.

Criterion 7.4 is not met. There was no evidence available to the reviewer of children and families being asked about their views on policies and practice for keeping children safe.

**Recommendations**

- 10. That the Congregational Leader ensures a safeguarding plan of action for Ireland is developed.**
- 11. That the Congregational Leader ensures the development of a communication strategy with children and families to engage them in their views in respect of safeguarding practices.**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1. That the Congregational Leader ensures that a process is put in place to ensure that the safeguarding policies in the congregation's centres in Ireland are consistent with the congregational safeguarding document, dated March 2014 and vice versa.**
- 2. That the Congregational Leader ensures that guidance in respect to trips and holidays are part of the congregational safeguarding document.**
- 3. That the Congregational Leader ensures that safety plans/agreements/contracts in respect of persons subject to allegations of having abused others are included in all relevant safeguarding documents.**
- 4. That the Congregational Leader ensures role descriptions for national link coordinators and local Safeguarding Officers/Designated Liaison persons are developed and included in the Congregational Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Document.**
- 5. That the Congregational Leader ensures that a policy for dealing with complaints from adults and children regarding unacceptable behaviour towards children and vulnerable adults is developed; and that this is included in the Congregational Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Document.**
- 6. That the Congregational Leader ensures that contact details for civil authorities i.e. Gardaí/PSNI and child protection services in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland are included in all congregational safeguarding documentation.**
- 7. That the Congregational Leader conducts a review of the policy to ensure that all aspects of Standard 3 are included in any future revision of the policy document.**
- 8. That the Congregational Leader ensures that safeguarding information for children which is age appropriate and in child-friendly language is developed.**
- 9. That the Congregational Leader ensures the identification and training of specific survivor and respondent support personnel, which would enhance and provide a structured response of the congregation to future allegations.**
- 10. That the Congregational Leader ensures a safeguarding plan of action for Ireland is developed.**
- 11. That the Congregational Leader ensures the development of a communication strategy with children and families to engage them in their views in respect of safeguarding practices.**

**Review of Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Ireland**

**Terms of Reference (which should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Notes)**

1. To ascertain the full extent of all complaints or allegations, knowledge, suspicions or concerns of child sexual abuse, made to the Church Authority (Diocese/religious congregation/missionary society) by individuals or by the Civil Authorities in the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 1975 up to the date of the review, against Catholic clergy and/or religious still living and who are ministering/or who once ministered under the aegis of the Church Authority, and examine/review and report on the nature of the response on the part of the Church Authority.
2. If deemed relevant, select a random sample of complaints or allegations, knowledge, suspicions or concerns of child sexual abuse, made to the Church Authority by individuals or by the Civil Authorities in the period 1st January 1975 to the date of the review, against Catholic clergy and/or religious now deceased and who ministered under the aegis of the Church Authority.
3. Examine/review and report on the nature of the response on the part of the Church Authority.
4. To ascertain all of the cases during the relevant period in which the Church Authority
  - knew of child sexual abuse involving Catholic clergy and/or religious still living and including those clergy and/or religious visiting, studying and/or retired;
  - had strong and clear suspicion of child sexual abuse; or
  - had reasonable concern;
  - and examine/review and report on the nature of the response on the part of the Church Authority.

As well as examine

- Communication by the Church Authority with the Civil Authorities;
- Current risks and their management.



**Review of Safeguarding Practice of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary**

5. To consider and report on the implementation of the 7 safeguarding standards set out in *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* (2009), including the following:
  - a) A review of the current child safeguarding policies and guidance materials in use by the Church Authority and an evaluation of their application;
  - b) How the Church Authority creates and maintains safe environments.
  - c) How victims are responded to by the Church Authority
  - d) What training is taking place within the Church Authority
  - e) How advice and support is accessed by the Church Authority in relation to victim support and assessment and management of accused respondents.
  - f) What systems are in place for monitoring practice and reporting back to the Church Authority.

**Accompanying Notes**

**Note 1: Definition of Child Sexual Abuse:**

The definition of child sexual abuse is in accordance with the definition adopted by the Ferns Report (and the Commission of Investigation Report into the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin). The following is the relevant extract from the Ferns Report:

*“While definitions of child sexual abuse vary according to context, probably the most useful definition and broadest for the purposes of this Report was that which was adopted by the Law Reform Commission in 1990<sup>1</sup> and later developed in Children First, National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Department of Health and Children, 1999) which state that “child sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or that of others”. Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:*

- *exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child;*
- *intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification;*
- *masturbation in the presence of the child or the involvement of the child in an act of masturbation;*
- *sexual intercourse with the child whether oral, vaginal or anal;*
- *sexual exploitation of a child which includes inciting, encouraging, propositioning, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in prostitution or other sexual acts. Sexual exploitation also occurs when a child is involved in exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, video tape, or other media) or the manipulation for those purposes of the image by computer or other means. It may also include showing sexually explicit material to children which is often a feature of the ‘grooming’ process by perpetrators of abuse.”*

**Note 2: Definition of Allegation:**

The term allegation is defined as an accusation or complaint where there are reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, or is being sexually abused, or is at risk of sexual abuse, including retrospective disclosure by adults. It includes allegations that did not necessarily result in a criminal or canonical investigation, or a civil action, and

---

<sup>1</sup> This definition was originally proposed by the Western Australia Task Force on Child Sexual Abuse, 1987 and is adopted by the Law Reform Commission (1990) *Report on Child Sexual Abuse*, p. 8.

**Review of Safeguarding Practice of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary**

allegations that are unsubstantiated but which are plausible. (NB: Erroneous information does not necessarily make an allegation implausible, for example, a priest arrived in a parish in the Diocese a year after the alleged abuse, but other information supplied appears credible and the alleged victim may have mistaken the date).

**Note 3: False Allegations:**

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland wishes to examine any cases of false allegation so as to review the management of the complaint by the Diocese/religious congregation/missionary society.

**Note 4: Random sample:**

The random sample (if applicable) must be taken from complaints or allegations, knowledge, suspicions or concerns of child sexual abuse made against all deceased Catholic clergy/religious covering the entire of the relevant period being 1<sup>st</sup> January 1975 to the date of the Review.

**Note 5: Civil Authorities:**

Civil Authorities are defined in the Republic of Ireland as the Health Service Executive and An Garda Síochána and in Northern Ireland as the Health and Social Care Trust and the Police Service of Northern Ireland.